

PEOPLE OF THE HAPPY MEDIUM?

Sketch of a socio-psychological self-portrait¹

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How can happiness be measured? Possibly, it can be embraced, counted, poured into a glass, or listed according to the top five indicators. Happiness can also be measured in percentages if the topic concerns the feeling of a nation. Therefore, in accordance with the poll conducted by the Sociological Service of the Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies (UCEPS), 9.8% of our citizens feel happy. 22.7% is satisfied with their lives, while 52.4% is not. Finally, 7.5% of the population feels unhappy.

The emotional portrait of the Ukrainian nation can be drawn from these happiness and unhappiness percentages. What do the light and dark shades of this portrait depend on, what do we believe to be priorities in our lives, and what do we accept with calm or even indifference? How do we raise our children, and how do we spend our free time? What pluses and minuses do we give ourselves and our fellow citizens? These and many other questions were answered by two thousand individuals, 98.4% of whom are Ukrainian citizens, questioned by the Sociological Service of the UCEPS. The research undertaken may not be the ultimate truth, in the last instance, but it does give us a picture of the state of the single source for authority of the Ukrainian nation — the people. It is the people who choose the President and People's Deputies from among its ranks, and then later must live with their choice. In this connection, some data which were collected during this representational sociological polling allows for the unlocking of the secret of the Ukrainian phenomenon. While in Russia this phenomenon can be characterised as the enigmatic nature of the Russian soul, in America — as the material attainment of the American dream, then in Ukraine, especially under present conditions, the puzzle is the patience of the people. Let's look at everything in order. But first of all, the most important.

1. ON OURSELVES

Values

It appears that we are a very domestic and quiet people. Above all, and in the following order, we value health, family, the opportunity to get paid for work, wellbeing, and peace in the country. Everything else worries us less, and least of all — politics.

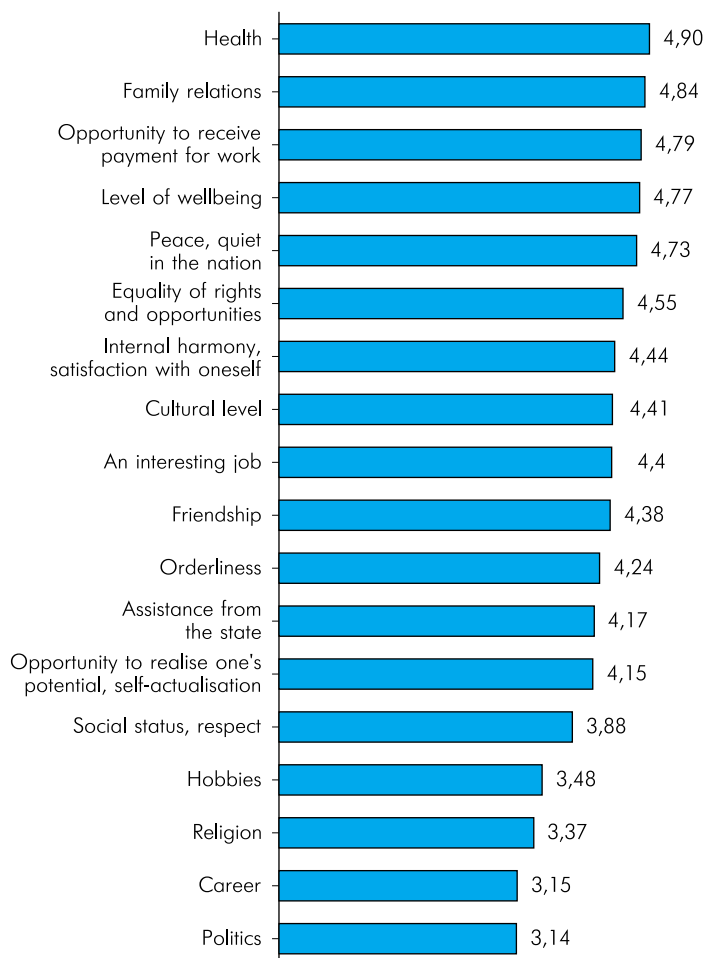
If one is to judge according to the average point value given by respondents to the level of importance of a given aspect of their lives (a 5 indicating the highest degree of importance on a five-point scale), then our system of values takes the following shape (*Diagr. "Life values rating of citizens of Ukraine"*).

Health

98.1% of respondents indicated the importance of this aspect of life by giving it the highest marks (4 and 5). But we shouldn't be too quick to draw the conclusion that we are overly concerned about a healthy lifestyle according to the American example. As it turns out, only 5.4% participates in sports activities on a daily basis, while nearly 70% is completely inactive in this respect. The more probable scenario is that we simply understand that healthcare is increasingly becoming an unattainable luxury, while health itself is turning into a condition for survival. That's why we place a high value on health without condemning those (and by the same token, ourselves) who smoke 10 or more cigarettes a

¹ The article was published on March 4, 2000 in newspaper *Zerkalo Nedeli*.

Life values rating of Ukrainian citizens



day, as well as those who drink themselves into a state of oblivion once a week. But in general, as the responses show, we drink very little: it appears that one-third, or 33.1%, doesn't consume alcohol at all, 4.6% never drinks wine, and nearly half (48.7%) doesn't care for beer.

The overall impression was that we were not



filling out anonymous questionnaires, but employment applications!!! However, this is not a reflection of alcohol allegiances, but rather, the level of honesty in answering the questions being the subject of public dispraise. But let us be charitable to respondents. Have you never sneaked a look at the answers on tests in order to see yourselves as the ones who have given the correct responses? You see, it is very difficult to admit one's drawbacks, after all.

Family

We, citizens of Ukraine, as unusual as it may seem, are consistent in our life priorities. Results recently obtained by UCEPS coincide completely with the data of the monitoring dynamic of the value of priorities conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the Socis-Gallup service on the basis of polls taken in 1991, 1994 and 1997. Health firmly holds the first position in each of these polls. Next come prosperity, welfare of the children, family, favourable climate in the country and the creation of equal opportunities in society for everyone. There is one nuance which is worth mentioning. An increase in the average score for the priority of family has been noted: in 1991 — 4.44; in 1994 — 4.51; in 1997 — 4.71. It occupied third-fourth place behind prosperity and welfare of the children. According to UCEPS research, the importance of the family was valued by respondents at 4.84 points. Although no separate question was presented with respect to children's welfare, in 1997, it stood in second-third position behind "strong family". Despite all reservations regarding the admissibility of comparison of results of various research, it can be concluded that our life has become more centred on the family, as though shrinking into this natural, consanguineous cell as a means of sheltering oneself (at least for the time being?) from social problems and calamities.

That's why, perhaps, there is a decreasing number of those in Ukraine who ignore the priority of family. Only three out of one hundred citizens are decidedly single and value the level of importance of the family in the range of 1-3 points. The vast majority (97.2%) are individuals dedicated to family. The factor that distinguishes itself as the most important one underlying our daily behaviour is our sense of "duty to our close relatives" (according to 88.2% of respondents). All other factors are far less of a priority. For example, morality, as a very influential factor, was indicated by only 59.8% of those polled, the law — by 44.6%, and duty to country — by 20.3%. It's not even worth discussing political allegiances (10.3%).

As far as our understanding of "social envi-

ronment” is concerned, in all appearances, it has not changed much from the time of the “Kaydash family”, as the Ukrainian writer and poet Ivan Nechuy-Levitskiy saw it. This especially refers to parents. We sincerely believe that parents should be loved and respected independently of their positive qualities and drawbacks (85%). But we desire to live separately from them, as shown by 84.3% of those polled who indicated that living separately from one's parents is an important condition for one's own happy marriage.

Many factors determine our happy marriage. Above all, the presence of respect and mutual support between individuals (97.2%), then, children (96.8%), understanding and patience (96.7%), mutual faithfulness (96.4%), and the readiness to discuss problems that arise between the spouses (93.5%). Only later, and one notch lower, do the factors of living conditions (92.7%) and high incomes (91.8%) appear.

The old saying “Birds of a feather flock together” is not applicable, insofar as we are not concerned with social background as a factor that is important for a happy marriage: only 11.4% of respondents say that it matters. Religious convictions are also of little importance (14.3%), while the least role is played by agreement on political matters (7.3%) and whether individuals are of the same nationality (6.8%).

There is still hope for our yawning demographers and pension system reformers, for in today's difficult conditions, we are overwhelmingly concerned about sex (90.8%) as a condition for a happy marriage.

With respect to sex. Our attitude towards it is such that one would think that the spicy publications “Bulvar” and “Lel” are not written for us. That is to say, in the majority of instances, we believe that sex should be legally grounded. Other instances are seen as violations of the Seventh Commandment which we (74.2%) judge no less harshly than the Bible. We take a similar harsh stance towards extramarital sexual relations (67%) and the start of such relations prior to attaining adulthood (71.3%). We believe that even by our nature, our tendency towards sexual freedom is far smaller than towards faithfulness in marriage (14% versus 46%). Nevertheless, 40% could not say what was more characteristic of them (or of us). Probably they were all readers of “Lel”.

And now back to children. Thoughts with

respect to the time for ejecting them from the parental nest are divided. Nearly 55% of those polled believes that parents should do everything possible for their children, even at the expense of their own happiness. 34.7% doesn't accept this kind of infinite sacrifice, believing that parents have their own personal lives and cannot be required to sacrifice their happiness for their children's sake. One out of ten was undecided on the issue.

We are more uniform in how we value the most important qualities that a family should bestow on a child. In first position — industry (85.6%), followed by the sense of responsibility (70.2%), patience and respect regarding other people (58.6%), prudence (51%), and the ability to behave in society (47.4%). The last positions of 11 proposed qualities are held by — attention! — the ability to share (20.9%) and the degree of religious faith (10.8%). Only “imagination” was lower. Now, that's something to think about...



It's out of the question that the last and single largest family problem is divorce. With our high degree of dedication to family, our attitude to divorce is surprisingly realistic.

A significant number — 40% — could neither condemn nor justify divorce, one-third of those polled (32.3%) tends toward the belief that there are reasons justifying it, while only every fifth individual is quick to denounce it (21.8%). Against the background of a large number of divorces, it is no doubt comforting that nearly 76% highly value their degree of satisfaction in their family relations.

Work

We are hardworking and eager to work. Over two-thirds of those polled (69%) believe that our defining feature is the hardworking nature, while only every tenth individual believes that our defining characteristic is laziness. If salary does not meet with family needs, almost 40% is ready to look for a perquisite, while 26.9% would search for another job. And only 1.6% is ready to make money by breaking the law. We don't joke around with the law, even in an anonymous questionnaire.

We value an interesting job (average 4.4 points) and are indifferent to career (3.15). We value a job with a good salary rate (89.5% of respondents placed this condition in first place), while at the other extreme, we are prepared to be

satisfied with a guaranteed salary (second place, 46.3%). It is important for us to be surrounded by pleasant people in the workplace (23.2%), although “dealing with people” is important for a significantly smaller number of fellow citizens (17.5%). Far less significant for us are job characteristics as “not very stressful” (4.7%), and “a long vacation and a sufficient number of days off” (5.6%). 47% of those polled are fully, or most likely in agreement with the thought that work should always be in first place, even if there is less free time left as a result. We are content



with very little...

Employers of the world — unite in Ukraine! This is while we are still choosy in our choice of work and mostly believe (41.7%) that the unemployed should have the right to reject a job that they don't like. But the threat of unemployment has already taken fourth position in the category of problems that worry us (44.3%). And we are ready to fight for a working place with those who are like ourselves. Note, not competing, but simply limiting the access of outsiders to our city, village or location is what's needed, as nearly half of us tends toward the belief that competition awakens undesirable qualities in people. 72.2% of Ukraine's citizens completely, or most likely agrees that in the event of a deficit of working places, local inhabitants should be given priority. One-third (35.5%) agrees on doing away with women, inasmuch as they sincerely believe that in conditions of unemployment, the stronger sex has more rights. So where has our value hierarchy gone to? In sixth place, as the Diagram shows: equality of rights and opportunities, for which 89.9% of us voted for. So there you have it...

And the last thing regarding work: we are paid for it infrequently and not very fairly. Otherwise, how did late payments for work done presently or once done come into first position in

the list of problems: salaries, pensions, etc.? In what other country of the civilised world does not only work appear in the list of top values, but the “opportunity to receive payment for work done”?

Free time

Free time for us now, as in the past, is “cultural leisure”. First of all, we are not satisfied with our own level of culture: only every eighth individual saw it possible to give himself an “excellent” mark, every third person was unpretentiously satisfied with a grade of “good”, while a large number assessed their level of culture lower, including every seventh individual giving himself a “one”, on a five-point scale. And this is a wonderful description of ourselves, insofar as it bears witness to the characteristic of self-criticism.

What are we doing in order to raise our cultural level? The situation with positive characteristics looks a little different.

Above all, it appears that the classic question “Do you love the theatre?” lost its meaning and effect with respect to us. The overwhelming majority (79.3%) **never visits** the theatre. Only 18.5% visits it several times a year, while there are merely three out of one thousand theatre lovers that cannot live if they miss the theatre for even a week.

If the cinema remains the most important of the arts for us, as Lenin once put it, then we watch films on television. Because we **never go** to the cinema on an even greater scale than the theatre (83.6%). Only every eighth person (13.6%) sees films in the company of fellow citizens several times a year, while only two-plus out of one hundred — 1-2 times a month.

By contrast, nearly each of us can be confidently stopped at night in the street and asked “How can I get to the library?”. But not, what is the library like?! — the book market at Petrivka?

There is a basis for asserting that we would be able to show the way, because nearly every fourth individual reads books almost every day, every fifth — at least once a week, while only one in seven individuals (15.3%) will not be able to satisfy the interest of the midnight library seeker, because he **never reads** books.

Getting information on the “source of scientific literature” with our help is more difficult, since 42.6% of our citizens **never reads** special publications. A steady and systematic interest in it was noted on the part of only less than one-third of respondents, dedicating time to it if not on a daily, then at least on a weekly basis. And nearly one-third improves its post-graduate level from time to time — several times a month or year.

Ukraine has 2000 museums. But if a tourist who strayed from his group begins asking about



the nearest one, it will turn out easier for him to find out the location of a secret army unit. Because three-fourths of us **never visit** either museums or exhibitions. Only every fifth individual goes there several times a year, while there are



only five out of a thousand museum lovers among us. The tourist won't be that lucky.

He has ten times more chances finding a disco or night club, because nearly every fifth individual visits these places of cultural entertainment more or less frequently. But en masse — 79.5% — we **never go there**.

What we do most willingly in order to raise our cultural level is we listen to music daily (53%), with every tenth individual only **never listening to it**. By contrast, the situation regarding the independent playing of musical instruments is simply a disaster, and soon there will be no one to enter the conservatory. 85% of Ukraine's citizens never take an instrument into their hands. Only an incomplete six out of a hundred play music several times a year, while four do so once a month. In terms of prospects, the “singing rector” (M. Poplavskyi of the University of Culture) is left with no choice but to place his hopes on those two-three out of a hundred that play almost daily, or at least once a week.

Therefore, though we take a very critical stance towards our cultural level, we do little in order to raise it. Is it because we don't want to, or because we can't? It is difficult to answer this question directly. On the one hand, the conditions of our life don't make it possible, and the earning capacities don't provide for it. The currently unpopular Karl Marx was right when he affirmed that a hungry person demoralised by life's problems would be indifferent to the most beautiful sight.

But on the other hand. In the hierarchy of

qualities important in the raising of children, why is “imagination” — a quality so necessary for the understanding of beautiful things in art and in life — appeared in last place? Why did only eight out of one thousand people express their readiness to make donations in this area if it becomes possible to donate large sums, and only three out of a thousand promised to make such donations for the development of national arts?

And what we do not spare our earned, not won in a lottery, money on is presents for our friends. In this country it is not acceptable to visit people with empty hands, and we make calls on friends more often than go anywhere else. Every fourth individual visits friends or relatives at least once a week. This is probably because 78.5% of our fellow citizens are satisfied with their mutual relations with their friends.

Religion

We are religious in a strange way. We have already mentioned that in the hierarchy of our life's values, religion occupies one of the last places. Less than one-third of those polled (30.6%) gave it a “5”, another 20.2% — a “4”. In total, around one-half. And, notably, almost as many (49.6%) assume the level of satisfaction of their religious demands to be sufficient, also giving it 5 or 4 points. This is completely in line with the fact that in the list of problems that worry us most, inter-confessional conflicts and division of the church occupies 11th position out of 26. These problems worry less than one in ten individuals (9.7%).

More than half of those polled (52.2%) doesn't believe that similarity of religious convictions forms an important condition for a happy marriage. And finally, we remind our readers that religiousness occupies next to last place among the qualities that we want to bestow on our children. For the purpose of verifying — in the list attached to the form it was possible to indicate five qualities, rather than one. That is, we didn't simply give preference to being “hard-working” or, say, “having the ability to bear oneself in society”. If the context of indirect questions on religion are taken into account, then the conclusion cannot be avoided: we are far from being worried about establishing the Law of God in the schools, or the institution of the chaplain service in the army, as may be believed from mass media debates. And we are far from convinced in the salutary nature of a religious upbringing.

As far as religious organisations are concerned, the attitude towards them is in a very exemplary fashion reflected in the answer to the question of how we would spend large sums of money had we the chance to donate them. While 71.3% is prepared to make donations foremost

on the needs of the sick, socially unprotected children and orphans — and this is to our honour — only 2.2% is ready to donate on the needs of religious organisations. Let us be forgiven for



a possibly incorrect stance, but statistics is an unemotional realm: a slightly greater number of people are ready to make donations to shelters for homeless animals (2.3%) than to religious organisations.

Politics

In the system of our life values, politics takes 18th place out of 18. Is there any sense in discussing it? If one is to believe the ancient Greeks, then politics is participation in the affairs of the state and society. It is only necessary to figure out what for us is the state, and what is society. And what is our country for us? For the Greeks, all those things meant the same, and that's why they were citizens. But what are we?

2. ON THE NATION AND THE STATE MACHINE

We love our country. In the form, a direct question was posed: “What feeling does the word “Ukraine” evoke, above all?” Polled individuals gave their various responses. Every fourth individual, 25%, expressed his feelings in a direct and deep word — “Homeland”. Every twelfth

(7.8%) — “pride”, every fifteenth — “sorrow, despair”. There were many descriptions: “pain”, “tears”, “humiliation”, “native home”, “I love it”, “Mama”, “warmth and light”, “holy”, “granary”... Is it necessary to comment on these descriptions? Generous and moving ones were in the majority. But there were others. “Place of residence”, “poverty”, “begging”, “fear”, “worry”, “shame”, “third world country”, “ruins”, “impending doom”, “desire to leave”. In truth, these descriptions are different only at first glance. Doesn't despair stand behind them, mixed with love, after all?

We are patriots of Ukraine. More than two-thirds see themselves as such (70.7%). In this space, 7.8% gave a categorical “no”. Well, every family has its black sheep.

The phrase “small Homeland” is not an abstraction for us. Nearly half of those polled (45.2%) believes themselves to be inhabitants, first of all, of their own town, region, village, and of Ukraine in general — 26.5%. Only two out of one hundred feel themselves to be Europeans. In contrast, 10.4% are “citizens of the world”.

How much feeling of pride in our country do we need in order to attain a comfortable feeling about ourselves? Here, thoughts were divided. 42.3% answered that in order to feel happy, one's own happiness is sufficient, while nearly as many — 43% — believes that it is necessary to be proud of their country. What would we like to be proud of most of all? A high standard of living, economic development, and the social welfare of the population (76.85; 67.85; 63.8%, respectively). We are willing to keep up with the Joneses.

Despite our love for the country, and the feeling of pride and pain for it, every sixth individual is not prepared to defend it in a hypothetical war situation. Every third individual expressed doubts that we would defend the Homeland in the same unselfish way as was done during the years of the Second World War. And every fifth individual drew a limit as to the extent of his sacrifice depending on what country it was necessary to fight. What is it with us? It is possible that our mostly warm attitude towards the country is shadowed by an antipathy towards the state machine.

We have our separate relationship with the latter. We don't like authority, for (remember the Greeks with their “politikh”) we don't participate in the affairs of the state. In order to participate in the affairs of the state, it is necessary to take part in the affairs of society, it is necessary to be a society, since our state is a “res publica” — a social, common affair.



3. ON SOCIETY

Think hard! Two-thirds of us (67.3%) believe that in relations with people, it is necessary to be very cautious, and only an incomplete one-third (26.7%) is ready to trust not everyone but, take note, most people in any case.

Truth be told, this strange lack of trust in no way saved us from trusts, investment funds and other pyramids. We are capable of placing our trust in almost any words announced from the rostrum, the television screen, or newspaper page.

But we do not believe one another. We do not believe those who are like ourselves - ordinary, rank and file compatriots. To the contrary, we have a tendency to suspect them for that which we ourselves don't do, but hold others in judgement for. Indeed, most of us (59.4%) believe that there is no justification for receiving government aid to which the recipient has no right. In addition to this, 78.9% believes that there are "many" (40.9%), or "some" (38%) who do just so. Similarly, not justifying tax evasion (50.4%), 76.6% suspects those "many" (50.7%) and "some" (25.9%) in doing just that. Approximately the same correlation exists in how we accept small and large sins — from the dis-



posal of garbage in public places and the unpaid-for ride on public transport, to lies in one's own interests and the acceptance of bribes — with the conviction that the majority of our law-abiding fellow citizens do so without any kind of shame. Why are we so convinced about this? This may

sound insulting, but it should be remembered that we normally judge others, according to ourselves. These are not strangers who throw whatever pleases them wherever, nor are they strangers who take bribes and don't pay taxes. They are "we".

But "we" separate ourselves from "them". "We" will never have a "common social affair" with "them". "We" — numbering up to 90% — take no part in any public associations, parties, movements and other common activities. Because we also don't trust common activities. We don't place our hopes in them, and await neither aid nor support from them.

In other words, "we" — is at most that very same family which we value so highly. Our "detached" house, or hut, has nothing to do with the neighbourhood. This saying about one's house took second place among those that most effectively reflect the defining traits of our character.

"We" — this is not society. We — this is each one by oneself. If Aristotle was alive among us today, it would never enter his head to state that man is a social animal. We are the descendants of Ukrainian philosopher and educator Skovoroda — society can chase us all it wants, but it is unlikely to catch us.

That's why, in returning to politics, "we" don't relate to the state, but to authority. Because it is authority that takes care of our "common affair". At least it should...

4. ON AUTHORITY

Today's active authorities we hate with a passion. But even with this, we don't lose our hopes and dreams, and like Alyosha Fedyashyn — the unfortunate client of Count Kaliostro, as depicted in a Russian film — we continue to dream of an ideal authority and demand that our sensual ideas become materialised.

In the ideal, authority should be responsible (so thinks 98.1%), honest (97.6%), competent (96.7%), democratic (83.9%), predictable (82%), and even authoritarian. Such high requirements, which even the founding fathers would be secretly startled by, are not explainable by our romantic nature, or the traces of a classical education. There are reasons for believing that everything is far more straightforward. Simply, "we", without relying on rank-and-file fellow citizens, have a great need for authority and clearly understand and accept our dependence on it.

Only every fourth individual (24.1%) believes that his personal influence on the direction of his own life is very significant, or at least significant to some extent. 44% assesses their

efforts somewhat more pessimistically, and another one-fourth (25.4%) could not decide, taking a middle position. More than three-fourths (76.8%) believe help from the state to be very important, only 13% is relatively indifferent to it, and only every tenth individual (10.1%) is prepared to acknowledge that it is not especially important.

Very interesting answers were received to the question “What would be the first thing you do if you won 100,000 hryvnias?” Notwithstanding all of our commendable care of what tomorrow holds in store and even fear of the future, only every sixth individual (15.9%) would risk starting his own business. Only 8.6% would spend the money on educating their children abroad, and nearly half (41.8%) would immediately take care of their urgent problems with home improvements, the purchase of expensive furniture, clothing, and other things. Almost 9% would live without sparing any expenses for some time, and a little over 1.5% would spend the win on a trip. Almost 3% would spend a large sum on a charitable cause. An affirmative response to “Would you give all of this money or a large part

of it to the state?” was given by 0.2%. And one should not doubt of the poll organisers' mental capacities. The questions are not accidental, since during the 1998 financial crisis, the citizens of South Korea donated their own valuables and expensive items en masse to the state banks with the goal of supporting their national currency. If the National Bank of Ukraine was to turn to the citizens of Ukraine today with the request to support the hryvnia in like manner, then 47% would “not give anything because they don't believe that their

donation would truly go towards supporting the national currency, but would be stolen”. 36% answered as follows: “I couldn't donate anything because I don't have any valuables”, 12.3% would not give anything, since they don't believe that protecting the hryvnia is their problem, but the state's. There were 2.7% devoted patriots who said that they would “definitely give all of their valuables, including family relics and wedding rings”.

And note: this is South Korea, not North, where one can become an altruist despite one's own will... Although many of us pine for the North Korean-like system. Meaning the Soviet Union. And this is taking place not because the

vast majority of those who so yearn were young then, as only 5.3% of those who wished to return to the past answered in this manner. What we yearn for is the feeling of confidence with respect to the future that used to exist (62.1%), the well-being (60.9%), and the high level of social guarantees during Soviet times (46.9%).

At the same time, there are no threats of a left-led revenge. Leader of Ukrainian Communists Petro Symonenko rest easy — the burden of state responsibility is unlikely to fall on his shoulders. 52.6% of Ukraine's citizens are completely uninterested in achieving such a goal. And for the 18.9% who wants this, there is 28.5% who would like a “renaissance” but understands that this is unrealistic under today's conditions.

But today's representatives of authority are not to our liking, despite the fact that they did not take the administrative buildings on Bankivska or Hrushevskoho streets by storm. We picked them ourselves, amicably voting at elections that were not held for the first time ever,



and which were, among other things, democratic. Not so? Not democratic? We are so infantile that even European observers defended us, ignorant people, saying that there was mass media and administrative pressure. Well, we are grateful for the defence. Indeed, there was pressure, and of an administrative nature. But are we not over 18 years old? Did we somehow participate in our elections, or were we just present there? And furthermore: who was in the administrative mechanism? We again.

We elected Parliament ourselves in 1998 and the President in 1999. Why? For 73.4% of the voters to immediately inform them that MPs and the President “are not patriots” or “are unlikely to be Ukrainian patriots”? This stance towards Ukraine's entire governing elite is held by all those polled. But there are also separate thoughts regarding every branch of power that we elected, as well as the ones appointed by those whom we elected.

Parliament is the leader in our negative attitude regarding present-day authorities. We may

take our ideal and place a “minus” sign next to every model quality that we desire. Only nine out of one hundred (8.8%) believe that Parliament is responsible (4 and 5 points on a five-point scale), seven times more (62.2%) gave it a mark “1” or “2” – “completely, or almost not responsible”; 11.3% believes it to be competent, while



those who think it is incompetent numbered four and a half times more (51.1%); one out of ten (9.9%) believes it to be predictable, while almost six times that number stick to the contrary view (54.2%); 17% assesses its actions as transparent, while those who don't believe them to be transparent number nearly three times more (46.7%); only six out of a hundred citizens (6.1%) gave the highest grade to the legislative branch for honesty, while almost 70% happily gave it “ones” and “twos”. With respect to Parliament's corruption, in our opinion, everything is as it should be: 59.9% believes this quality to be intrinsic to Parliament, while 13% holds the contrary opinion. Among us there are still some stubborn non-conformists.

The perception of the government — and



this should be noted — is a little softer, at least, there are less negative assessments. Most likely, that's thanks to Viktor Yushchenko, who has a sufficient reserve of national support at his disposal. There were almost 14% less strongly pessimistic assessments with respect to the responsibility of the Cabinet of Ministers for what happens than in the case of Parliament; 12% fewer negative marks for competence, nearly 10% — for predictability and honesty, 3% — for transparency of actions. But positive assessments did not veer far from the characteristics of Parliament. 54% of those polled voiced their belief that corruption is intrinsic to the government.

We were relatively tolerant with respect to the President. This demonstrates, among other things, that even under mass media and administrative pressure, we were thinking about what we were doing after all. We

extended Leonid Kuchma a new line of credit in trust. Or, if you will, restructured the old one.

The President received the highest number of votes in favour at assessment of his responsibility (30.3%), competence (35.2%), and honesty (23.4%).

Yet no one and nothing restructured the President's staff. The number of positive assessments of the staff's qualities is significantly lower than for the President himself, while nearly half of Ukraine's citizens (46.5%) believes his staff to be corrupt.

In the eyes of the people, local authorities are not far removed from the President's staff, but a little closer, in any case, than Parliament. Their corruption level collected 9% more votes than that of the presidential staff, but 5% less than Parliament.

But these marginal grades are on a five-point scale. In a situation of assessments of power structure qualities, we experienced a very interesting grouping. With rare exceptions, in the above-mentioned five-point scale, as a rule, near the three mark, a stubborn tendency of convergence in the “three” space was noted. That is to say, a given quality turned out to be not especially characteristic of a power subject, nor was it lacking. The middle — down the middle, so to speak.

Coincidence? It does not appear to be so if one considers that of 25 “threes”, 19 were occupied by a relative majority. We are almost firmly balanced around the three mark. A little to one end of the scale — the assessment is worse,

a bit to the other end — better. Not in a political sense, but in terms of prospects.

If the present, currently disliked but necessary, authorities were a little nicer to us, a little more honest and open, then we would be ready to give up the notion of the materialisation of our cherished ideas. But if not, then...

If not — then not. Nothing bad will happen. We have no plans to protest in the nearest future. Only one-fourth of those polled (26.6%) expressed their verbal readiness to take part in legally sanctioned protest actions, another one-fourth (25.9%) is inclined towards signing petitions. Only nine out of a hundred are willing to frighten authorities with unsanctioned actions, while an incomplete four individuals out of one hundred (3.7%) could devise taking over administrative buildings. In general, this even seems like a respectable number, with respect to declaring plans. But as it turns out, very few of us realistically participated in protest actions: 7.3% of citizens signed petitions, 5.5% participated in sanctioned activities, 1.4% — in unsanctioned activities, while 0.4% — in the take-over of various administrative buildings and enterprises.



In general, and on the whole, the majority of our protest actions depends, most of all, on the skills and abilities of television operators.

Because 84.5% of us will never take part in any movements, 77.4% — in unsanctioned actions, and more than half has no plans to sign petitions or to participate in legally sanctioned protest actions (53.7% and 56.2%, respectively).

And this is under conditions, let it be recalled, that the overwhelming majority of Ukrainians is unsatisfied with their lives, the authorities, their wages, etc. Can our difficult-to-comprehend love for peace and patience be

explained to the tourist who recently asked us where the museum is? No, they can't; it is not worthwhile, and one shouldn't try. He — a Frenchman, German or Pole — won't understand, in any event. He doesn't understand how it is possible to not receive wage payments for years — and to come out every spring for sowing, and in the fall — for harvesting; to not see money for months on end — and all the same, to enter the mines to dig out coal. And what will he say, if quoted the responses of one-third of those who were willing to protest and were asked the reasons behind such a long-term preparation period? Do you know the nature of their response? "There were no reasons for protesting". On a comparative scale of the effectiveness of such a response, only one other can compete with it: "I don't think that such actions are effective, because the authorities ignore them all the same". In other words, if the authorities continue to ignore my inclinations to protest, then I will increase my inclinations to do so all the more.

This kind of respectful attitude towards any form of authority is probably found among the individual traits of our character. We believe that such a submissive trait is more characteristic of Ukrainians than rebelliousness (48% of respondents versus 12%); the inclination towards obedience — greater than the ability to lead (37% versus 19%); conformity — greater than strength in convictions (42% versus 16%). If we add to all of this our well-known hardworking nature, then a portrait of a nation can be drawn which is ideal for the state and for authority. We are suspicious, and that's the reason for division; we tend towards submissiveness and impressionability; we are closed and that's why we don't admit even to our own faults, but also why we forgive them in others, including the authorities. Given that, we are obedient and hardworking.

If we were governed normally, then we could move mountains! An impression forms that we are not citizens of the country, but in the custody of the authorities. And if we take into consideration the priority qualities that we want to instil in our children, such as a hardworking nature, a sense of responsibility, and patience, then it can be predicted that the tradition of forming these character traits will continue, and the authorities will be able to take advantage of such convenient for them qualities for a long time to come. It's interesting whether it will ever enter the heads of the authorities to take advantage of them for the sake of our own wellbeing?